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ABSTRACT

The New Chance national demonstration project is designed to help disadvantaged 17- to 21-year-old mothers and their children achieve economic self-sufficiency and optimal physical and psychological development and thereby to curtail the perpetuation of intergenerational poverty. The New Chance model provides a variety of services to meet the program's multiple objectives. The model will be implemented in 10 states at 16 selected sites that will serve as models for other states and organizations interested in developing similar programs. At least 100 young mothers will participate at each site. Funding will be provided through a consortium of federal, state, and local government agencies, private corporations, and foundations that are committed to increasing knowledge about programs that can inform social policy. The model was piloted in six sites for a year. The pilot sites were successful in attracting the highly disadvantaged population for whom the model was developed, and the sites were able to mount and integrate the comprehensive services that comprise New Chance. Short-term data on the performance of the pilot programs and the achievements of participants suggested that the model has sufficient strength and promise to make the yearlong, 16-site test. (Project funders and names and addresses of demonstration sites are listed.) (KC)

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

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NEW CHANCE – A NEW INITIATIVE FOR ADOLESCENT MOTHERS AND THEIR CHILDREN

New Chance is an innovative national demonstration that addresses a problem high on the nation's social agenda: how to help disadvantaged teenage mothers and their children achieve economic self-sufficiency and optimal physical and psychological development, and thereby to curtail the perpetuation of inter-generational poverty.

The New Chance model has been designed by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC), a nonprofit organization that develops and evaluates programs to help the disadvantaged become self-sufficient. The model draws on MDRC's 15 years' experience in managing such programs, on reviews of the relevant literature, and on consultations with policymakers, program operators, academicians, and other experts.

The New Chance model is notable for the variety and intensity of the services it offers to meet the program's multiple objectives. These objectives are to increase participants' educational and vocational skills levels and their ability to secure stable employment; to enable participants to control their fertility; to lessen dependence on public assistance and help participants escape poverty; to increase self-esteem and self-confidence; to bolster parenting, communication, and other life management skills; and to improve the cognitive, emotional, and physical development of participants' children. The demonstration will produce reliable information about the effectiveness of the program's comprehensive approach in helping participants achieve these diverse aims.

The New Chance model will be implemented in 10 states at 16 selected sites, which will serve as models for other states and organizations interested in developing similar programs. At least 100 young mothers will participate at each site. Funding is through a consortium of federal, state, and local government agencies, private corporations, and foundations that are committed to increasing knowledge about programs that can inform social policy.

This overview provides information about the:

- New Chance program model,
- policy context for the demonstration,
- scope of the evaluation and issues it will address,
- selection of demonstration states and sites,
- committed funders and ongoing fund-raising activities, and
- benefits of participation in the demonstration.

NEW CHANCE MODEL

MDRC pilot-tested the New Chance model in 6 sites for a year before embarking on the full-scale national demonstration. The pilot phase demonstrated the operational feasibility and promise of the model. The pilot sites were successful in attracting the highly disadvantaged population for whom the model was developed. Further, the sites were able to mount, operate, and integrate the comprehensive services that comprise New Chance. Short-term data on the performance of the pilot programs and the achievements of participants suggested that the model has sufficient strength and promise to warrant further, rigorous testing.

The distinctive features of New Chance are:

The Target Population. The program is targeted to those at greatest risk of long-term welfare dependency:

- 17- through 21-year-old women who had their first child as a teen,
- are welfare recipients, and
- are high school dropouts.

Integration of Services. The focus of New Chance is on the integration of the services, not just the implementation of the separate program components. The services have several unifying themes: an active, problem-solving approach to learning, an emphasis on decision-making and on building communication skills, and a focus on building

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participants' sense of personal efficacy and self-esteem.

On-Site Provision of Services. Except for classroom skills training and health services, most New Chance services will be provided at the New Chance site, either by program staff or by personnel from appropriate community agencies. This will allow the programs to have greater control over service quality, enhance service coordination and integration, and enable case managers to spend more time addressing the participants' developmental needs.

Duration of Services. The New Chance intervention is divided into three phases: two in-program phases lasting up to 18 months and a follow-up phase of 6 to 12 months' duration. During Phase I, which lasts up to 5 months, the focus is on education and personal development activities. Phase II, which typically begins after the fifth month of program enrollment, involves a greater emphasis on activities directly related to employment. Participants entering this phase may continue in education and personal development classes but must also either enter an occupational skills training course or be placed in a work internship. This phase ends when the participant completes training and is placed in an unsubsidized job or enters a more advanced skills training or educational program. The Phase III follow-up may include counseling and additional assistance, for example, in locating jobs and child care and community resources. A major emphasis during the follow-up period is to help those who are working to adjust to their jobs and to balance work and family demands.

Intensity of Services. The New Chance program will also require a sustained level of involvement by the participants and agencies. While a key element of the approach is a nurturing and supportive staff and program environment, the wide range of opportunities afforded participants will require them to fulfill obligations as well, and to participate regularly in services offered at least 4 days a week, 5 to 6 hours a day. Individualized service plans will be formalized in a participant contract. Given the length and intensity of participation, New Chance will also reimburse enrollees for expenses wherever possible and provide tangible and non-tangible incentives to reward and encourage good performance.

Comprehensiveness. Each New Chance site will provide services in four areas.

1. ***Educational Development***

   Instruction in basic academic skills and GED (high school equivalency) preparation. Participants will receive instruction in reading, computation, writing, and other essential academic skills. To the degree possible, New Chance sites will use individualized, competency-based educational curricula supplemented by group activities and computer-assisted instruction.

2. ***Employability Development***

   Career exploration and pre-employment skills. New Chance will help young women increase their knowledge of a broad range of job and career options (including non-traditional occupations for women). It will also educate them in the skills and attitudes needed to find and keep jobs.

   Vocational skills training. New Chance participants will learn job-specific skills through vocational training courses.

   Work internships and summer work experience. Enrollees may also work for limited periods under close supervision to explore the types of jobs that interest them, while learning basic work skills. Enrollees may also participate in summer work experience jobs sponsored under the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA).

   Job placement assistance. The program emphasizes placing enrollees in stable jobs that pay competitive wages and offer benefits and the potential to advance with experience.

3. ***Personal and Social Development***

   Health education. Participants will receive instruction on health-promoting behaviors and on how to secure medical care for themselves and their children.

   Health services. Medical and dental care will be available to all participants.

   Family planning. Group workshops and individual counseling afford opportunities to discuss sexuality, contraception, and relationships. Family planning services will be available on-site or through linkages with community agencies.

   Prevention of substance abuse and AIDS. Participants will learn about substance abuse, AIDS, and other sexually transmitted diseases and about strategies for avoiding risk-taking

behaviors.

Parenting. Through support groups and supervised parent-child interaction, participants will develop the skills needed for successful child-rearing. Instruction will emphasize ways to provide cognitive stimulation and foster social and emotional growth.

Life management skills training. Special classes will teach enrollees how to cope with the complex demands of adult life, such as decision-making, communication, forming relationships, etc. MDRC has developed a curriculum for use at all sites to help young people learn decision-making skills.

Case management and counseling. Professional case managers will provide counseling, guidance, support, and client advocacy throughout the program.

4. *Services for Participants' Children*

Child care. New Chance programs will provide child care, which, wherever possible, will be on site and will follow approaches recommended by experts in child development to enhance the social, cognitive, and physical growth of the children.

Pediatric medical care. Medical services will be available to participants' children, who are expected to be under a physician's care for ongoing preventive services.

NEW CHANCE POLICY CONTEXT

The New Chance demonstration is unfolding in an environment marked by heightened concern about the problems associated with teenage childbearing and new policies that will give states both an incentive and a mandate to serve young mothers.

The rate of nonmarital childbearing among teenagers has rapidly become a major social issue. In 1987, more than 472,000 children were born to teen mothers – nearly one in seven births in the United States. While the number of all births to teens has actually declined over the last two decades, the proportion of out-of-wedlock births to teens has increased from a third in 1970 to 64 percent in 1987.

Adolescent parenthood is strongly correlated with school dropout and rapid subsequent pregnancies. Young women with weak reading and computational skills are far more likely to become teen parents, and about 40 percent of female teenage dropouts cite pregnancy or parenthood as the reason for leaving school. Over two-fifths of teenagers who give birth have a second child within three years.

Lack of educational attainment and larger families result in high rates of poverty and welfare dependency among single parents. In 1985, fully three-fourths of all families headed by single young women were poor. For blacks the rate jumped to 90 percent if the mother lacked a high school diploma. In 1988, federal, state, and local governments spent some $20 billion – over half of all AFDC expenditures – to support families that were formed as a result of teenage pregnancies. Welfare receipt among young mothers is likely to be long-term: minority mothers who are unmarried and high school dropouts average ten years on AFDC.

Finally, teen mothers account for one in five of all low-weight births – infants who, in turn, tend to have greater health and developmental problems. The negative effects on children of poverty and of living in single-parent households are also well documented.

Despite the personal and social consequences of adolescent pregnancy and parenting, the needs of mothers in the 17- to 21-year-old age range have largely gone unattended. Too old for school-based programs, these young women have also for the most part been unreached by mainstream employment and training programs.

Two recent policy developments are likely to change this picture and to facilitate implementation and institutionalization of New Chance. First, the Family Support Act (FSA) of 1988, the recently enacted welfare reform legislation, includes as one of its central features the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) Program for disadvantaged families receiving public assistance. States have a good deal of flexibility in designing appropriate employment programs but are required to provide educational activities, job skills training, job readiness activities, and job placement assistance, as well as transitional child care and medical assistance for up to one year to those who leave the welfare rolls for employment. One of the three groups specially targeted by the JOBS program – young AFDC mothers under age 24 – overlaps with the New Chance target group. Also, to the extent that state resources are available, the legislation requires all parents under age 20 to

participate in an educational program leading to a high school diploma or equivalency certificate as a condition of welfare receipt.

New Chance provides states with a model for packaging the services required under the Act on behalf of a particularly vulnerable group of welfare recipients. While New Chance has been designed as a voluntary program, in some states, it can be an option for individuals required to participate in some type of educational or employment-related activity. Moreover, the legislation will provide a source of funding at the state level to support programs that provide education, training, and employment, and child care services, to teen parents, and thereby increases the potential for replicating New Chance if the results of the research are positive.

Second, legislative proposals under consideration to amend the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) would make it easier to use JTPA funding to support programs like New Chance. These proposals respond to the recognition that while the tight labor market anticipated in the early 1990s may represent an unusual opportunity to prepare and bring into the labor market groups that traditionally have experienced difficulty in obtaining employment, current JTPA performance standards and funding restrictions deter skills training programs from serving the hard-to-employ. The new proposals would adjust these standards and restrictions and would target services to less job-ready groups including teenage parents and welfare recipients. In emphasizing acquisition of basic academic skills and development of human capital, New Chance also responds to recent changes in the labor market such as the increase in the proportion of jobs requiring literacy and communication skills.

Although there is new interest on the part of policymakers and program operators in serving young mothers, limited evidence exists on what works for this target group. The New Chance demonstration is designed to fill this gap in programming and knowledge. A recently completed 5-year follow-up study of participants in Project Redirection, MDRC's demonstration for school-age mothers and pregnant teens age 17 and under, suggests that comprehensive programs for school-age mothers can have lasting positive effects on their employment, earnings, and receipt of welfare and on the cognitive and social development of their children. Nonetheless, the data also suggest that more powerful interventions – like New Chance – are needed to help young mothers escape poverty and achieve self-sufficiency.

NEW CHANCE EVALUATION

MDRC will conduct a multifaceted evaluation of the New Chance model that includes implementation, impact, and benefit-cost studies.

Measuring program impacts, or effectiveness, requires a rigorous research design. Because some disadvantaged young mothers will succeed on their own, even without a program like New Chance, the evaluation needs to be able to show the *difference* that New Chance makes over and above what participants would have done without the program. To do this, the evaluation will randomly select from the target population applying for New Chance two groups: a "control" group of young women who are not offered New Chance services (but remain eligible for other services in the community) and a "treatment" group that is offered the services. Random assignment is the most methodologically valid way of creating the two groups; moreover, since programs for young mothers are rarely able to enroll all those seeking or needing their services, random assignment, like a lottery, is a fair way to distribute scarce resources. Members of both the treatment and control groups will be followed for 3 years. By comparing the outcomes of the two groups, MDRC will be able to provide credible information about the difference New Chance has made in participants' lives. The outcome areas that will be measured in the impact analysis include educational attainment, employment, earnings, welfare receipt, and fertility patterns for the mothers, and the cognitive and social development of the children.

The implementation analysis will look at the local conditions, administrative auspices, and implementation strategies that seem to be the most conducive to program success; the enrollees' patterns of participation in New Chance; the services they receive; and the paths taken to exit the program. The benefit-cost analysis will systematically compare and assess the benefits and costs of New Chance from a number of perspectives.

Preliminary plans call for four reports: a report on program start-up (June 1991); an interim implementation report (June 1992); a final implementa-

tion report that includes early findings on program impacts (December 1993); and a final report on impacts and the results of the benefit-cost analysis (June 1995).

SITE SELECTION FOR THE NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION

The goal of the site selection process was to identify 15 to 20 established, capable programs, in 7 to 10 states across the country, with the capacity and commitment to adopt the New Chance model and comply with the research requirements of the demonstration.

Site selection was a two-stage process. First, states applied to join the demonstration, agreeing to put in place the interagency cooperation critical to the success of New Chance, to nominate experienced local programs as potential New Chance sites, and to provide financial support for programmatic adaptations to the model. Second, MDRC staff visited the states and program candidates to assess their interest in New Chance, their ability to implement the model as intended and to deliver high-quality services, and their willingness to cooperate with research and data requirements.

The 16 sites (in 10 states) that have been chosen meet all the selection criteria. They represent a wide range of institutions: four schools, one post-secondary educational institution, one public agency, and ten community-based and community service organizations. The sites are listed on page 6.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Through technical assistance conferences and on-site training, MDRC staff and expert consultants in all program areas are assisting the sites to augment and enhance the quality of their services, so that each site can more readily provide the full range of services required in New Chance.

FUNDING THE DEMONSTRATION

The programmatic adaptations needed to create New Chance programs at the sites are being supported primarily through public funding from state and local human resource and job training agencies. MDRC has assembled a consortium of public and private funders to support the overall costs of managing and evaluating New Chance as well as the supplemental grants that go through MDRC to each New Chance site.

A list of funders who have committed support to the demonstration is shown on page 6. MDRC continues to work with federal agencies and national, community, and regional foundations to complete the funding base for the demonstration's research and technical assistance activities and to help sites secure funding for program enhancements.

BENEFITS FROM PARTICIPATING IN NEW CHANCE

For program sites, state officials, and funders alike, the major benefit of involvement in New Chance is being part of an important and promising effort to find a solution to the increasingly distressing problems surrounding young parents in the United States. The New Chance demonstration will provide sound information on which to ground national, state, and local decisions about policies, programs, and the allocation of resources to young parents.

Other benefits include the opportunity for states, sites, and funders to be part of an extensive, nationwide network involving policymakers, program operators, administrators, academicians, and other experts at the local, state, and national levels. MDRC will also bring fund-raising support to participating sites.

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NEW CHANCE DEMONSTRATION FUNDERS

U.S. Department of Labor
The Ford Foundation
W. K. Kellogg Foundation
Meyer Memorial Trust
The UPS Foundation
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund
The Pew Charitable Trusts
William T. Grant Foundation
Smith Richardson Foundation
The Skillman Foundation
The David and Lucile Packard Foundation
Stuart Foundations
AT&T Foundation
The Bush Foundation
Foundation for Child Development
The Allstate Foundation
The Chase Manhattan Bank
Exxon Corporation
Koret Foundation
Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation
GE Foundation
National Commission for Employment Policy
ARCO Foundation
Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation
Honeywell Foundation
The Pillsbury Company
Kaiser Permanente

NEW CHANCE DEMONSTRATION SITES

Sweetwater Union High School District
Adult Education Special Project Center
Del Rey Center
1034 4th Avenue, Room 409
Chula Vista, CA 92011
619-691-5790
Contact: Linda Taylor

Youth and Family Center
101 North LaBrea, Suite 100
Inglewood, CA 90301
213-671-1222
Contact: Stephanie Vendig

Eastside Union High School District
Independence Adult Center
625 Educational Park Drive
San Jose, CA 95133
408-923-3681
Contacts: Mary Jacobs, Meri Maben

Adams County Technical Education Center
Community College of Denver
6221 Downing Street
Denver, CO 80216
303-289-2243
Contact: Anthony Hermosillo

The Bridge
Family Health Services, Inc.
1824 Pearl Street
Jacksonville, FL 32206
904-354-7799
Contact: Delina Stephens

Aunt Martha's Youth Service Center, Inc.
414 Lincoln Highway
Chicago Heights, IL 60411
708-747-4984
Contact: Susan McNamara

The Family Care Center
1135 Red Mile Place
Lexington, KY 40504
606-288-4040
Contact: Jean Sabharwahl

Development Centers, Inc.
Community Mental Health Center
24424 West McNichols
Detroit, MI 48219
313-531-2500
Contact: Jessica Howell

Multi Resource Centers, Inc.
310 East 38th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55409
612-823-5393
Contact: Mary Mack

Mid-Manhattan Adult Learning Center
212 West 120th Street
New York, NY 10027
212-864-0973
Contact: Rose Wallace

National Puerto Rican Forum, Inc.
1910 Arthur Avenue, 4th Floor
New York, NY 10457
212-716-1300
Contact: Vivian Lopez

Portland Public Schools
PIVOT-New Chance Program
531 SE 14th Avenue
Portland, OR 97214
503-280-5840 (ext. 205)
Contact: Mary Bromel

The YWCA of Salem
768 State Street
Salem, OR 97301
503-585-2888
Contact: Jo Rita Gann

Expectant and Parenting Youth Program
Private Industy Council of Lehigh Valley
1601 Union Boulevard
P.O.B. 2287
Allentown, PA 18001
215-437-5627 (ext. 253)
Contact: Kathy Calabrese

Lutheran Settlement House Women's Program
Lutheran Social Mission Society
1340 Frankford Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19125
215-634-5120, 215-426-8610
Contacts: Monica Wysong, Robin Ingram

Pittsburgh in Partnership with Parents
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